



HAPALOTIS PENICILLATA, Gould.

J. Gould and H. C. Richter, del. et lith.

HAPALOTIS PENICILLATA, *Gould.*

Pencil-tailed Hapalotis.

Mus penicillatus, Gould in Proc. of Zool. Soc., Part X, p. 12.—Ann. and Mag. Nat. Hist., vol. x. p. 405.—List of Mamm. in Brit. Mus., p. 109.

Hapalotis melanura, List of Mamm. in Brit. Mus., p. 115. ?

THIS animal was procured by Mr. Gilbert during his short sojourn at Port Essington on the Cobourg Peninsula in Northern Australia, in which part of the country it was also obtained by Mr. MacGillivray and sent by him to the late Earl of Derby; specimens from the same country are also contained in the collection at the British Museum.

It is in every respect a true *Hapalotis*, and may be readily distinguished from the other members of the genus by the blackness of its tail, the hairs of which are much lengthened; and by the rigid, almost spiny, nature of the hairs clothing the back. Its habits would seem to be somewhat singular, inasmuch as it is frequently found among the swamps on the sea-shore; I have no evidence, however, that it is not also found in the interior of the country. I find the following note respecting it among the papers of the late Mr. Gilbert:—

“This little animal is only seen on the beach where there are large *Casuarina* trees, in the dead hollow branches of which it forms a nest of fine dry grass, and retires during the day; in the evening it leaves its retreat and proceeds to the beach, where it may be seen running along at the edge of the surf as it rolls up and recedes, apparently feeding upon any animal matter washed up by the waves.”

The fur of the upper surface is greyish brown grizzled with buff, with a rusty tint on the region of the occiput and back of the neck; around the angle of the mouth, the chin, throat, and all the under parts of the body, as well as the feet and inner side of the legs, are white with a faint yellow tint or cream-coloured, and the hair of these parts is of a uniform tint to the roots except on the chest, where they are grey next the skin: the tail is sparingly clothed at the base with minute bristly hairs; but about the middle the hairs become of a black colour and longer, and towards the apex attain a considerable length, measuring at and near the tip half an inch or more: the ears are sparingly clothed with minute hairs.

The figures represent the two sexes of the size of life.